



Will: Look at this. There's been a competition to design a new London bus.

Jing: Why do we need a new one?

Will: It's because all the old routemaster buses have been replaced by boxy new ones.

Jing: Yeah but they're still buses.

Will: Yeah but they're not routemasters. They're not icons Jing.

Jing: (off) I went off to find out about the competition and what made the routemaster an icon. First stop was London's transport museum.

(on) What is it about the routemaster that you think makes it so iconic?

Mike: I think partly, it's been around a long time. It was very well engineered and made when it was designed. It's very lightweight and it survived 50 years running a lot of mileage in London.

Jing: (off) If it was such a great bus, why were nearly all of them taken off the roads? I went to London's City Hall to find out.

Kulveer: It was old technology. It wasn't the most efficient. It didn't carry the best capacity of people. It used very unfriendly fuels. And we really needed to look at modern technology. Look at being more efficient. Look at how we can make it a clean, green hybrid bus, using more electricity, having a flat platform so it's more accessible for disabled people. So there were many reasons. But fundamentally it was old.

Jing: So why did you run a competition to design a new London bus?

Kulveer: I think the key thing was that we want to bring back this much-loved, much-missed icon of London. And the initial point was to make it exciting for Londoners. And what better way to give everyone an opportunity to get involved.

Jing: (off) When the competition for a new bus was launched, 700 entries were sent in from schools, members of the public and design companies. In the end, two winners were chosen. One for its technical qualities, the other for its design.

(on) Did you take much inspiration from the old buses for your new design?

David: Yeah we looked a lot. We spent a long time. We hired one for a day. We also spent a long time talking to passengers, we talked to drivers, we talked to conductors. And we tried to learn everything we could possibly learn about why the routemaster was as good as it was. And try and incorporate the best of that into the design of this bus.

Jing: How do you think your design has improved from the old routemaster?

David: Well I think it's going to be 30% lighter for the first. I think also the way the bus combines technologies together to be a more sustainable design, is really quite a major step forward.

Jing: (off) But will Londoners take the new bus to their hearts? Travis Elborough is so into the classic routemaster that he's written a book about it. What does he think about the new design?

Travis: I like the new design. I think largely because it builds on some of the classic elements about the routemaster bus. The friendliness of the facer, the curves, and I personally think that the new routemaster design takes some of those things. It does look like a modernised version of the classic. But it has, you know the advantages that it's fully accessible, it's environmentally-friendly. And as far as we know at the moment, it's actually still going to keep the hop-on hop-off platform at the back.

Jing: Where do you like to sit when you sit on a routemaster?

Travis: I like to sit actually, there's a seat at the front on the left-hand side there by the driver. So you sort of sit there and almost pretend you're driving.

Jing: Oh wow, thankyou, this is so cool.

(telephone) Hi this is Jing leave a message.

Will: Hi Jing, it's Will. I thought you were supposed to be back ages ago. What are you up to?

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